

A WOMAN'S STRATEGY

By Elizabeth Goodridge.

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"That big new building up on the hill yonder? Wasn't there last time you were in these parts, four years ago? I guess you're right. It's quite a bit of a story, though. You see, it



"You Can't Come In, Zeke," She Explained.

served its purpose and—but I'm beginning at the wrong end.

"Last time you were here we talked about the number of unmarried women in New England, didn't we? You asked why some of 'em didn't emigrate. Well, guess most men are alike, and if they couldn't find 'em here they wouldn't be apt to do so in the west. You see, though, they say

there are two women for every man in this part of New England, some of 'em ought to have got married. But none of 'em could. Marrying seemed to have gone out of fashion hereabouts.

"There was that Elsie Winton, whom Zeke Smith had been courting off and on for twenty years or so. Well, after a time Elsie naturally got tired of him and his procrustes ways. And Molly Bowen, about whom there had been some talk concerning Ed Green, the hotel man. He didn't come up to the scratch. And there was Winnie Custance, and Jenny White, and Nell Pringle—they didn't get their beaux any further than the ice cream counter, and that's how the idea came about.

"The folks in Boston thought at first it was a nunnery. The Chronicle sent one of its reporters down to see, but he didn't get any further than the wicked before Elsie Winston's face stopped him. She explained the matter to him as she slammed it. 'Just a few New England women who have got tired of men and have decided to live their own lives in their own way,' she said.

"There was a round dozen of 'em, and they farmed the land and milked their own cows and made their own butter. The plan was a hit from the start, especially as Molly, who was twenty-four and pretty for her age, drove the cart round the houses, wearing a mask and a loose Mother Hubbard. But what gave everybody a turn was the big sign standing outside the gate, which read No Men Admitted.

"Zeke Smith was one of the first to come and see what was doing. He got as far as the wicket, and there Elsie Winton's face stopped him.

"'You can't come in, Zeke,' she explained, 'being a man. I'm sorry you're a man, because if you weren't you'd be welcome. But we don't have dealings with men any more, except in a business way.'

"Zeke went home sore at heart,